

October 29, 2009

TO: Ronnie Sauer

FROM: Teresa Parsons, SPHR
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Ronnie Sauer v. Department of Corrections (DOC)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-09-008

On September 1, 2009, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference regarding the allocation of your position. In addition to you, Human Resources Consultants Joanne Harmon, Jenny Warnstadt, and Teresa Rucker also participated in the conference on behalf of DOC. Your husband, Rodney Sauer, was also present during the conference.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to April 16, 2008, the date an updated Position Description Form (PDF) was submitted to Stafford Creek Corrections Center's (SCCC's) Human Resources (HR) Office. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Office Assistant 3 classification.

Background

On April 16, 2008, an updated PDF for your position (#S357) was submitted to SCCC's HR Office. You had requested reallocation of your Office Assistant 3 (OA 3) position to the Human Resources Consultant Assistant 2 (HRCA 2) classification. On October 14, 2008, HR Consultant Teresa Rucker conducted a desk audit. Also on October 14, 2008, your supervisor, Facility Performance Coordinator Eric Stielau, submitted a letter supporting your position's reallocation to the HRCA 2 classification. On January 13, 2009, SCCC Human Resource Manager Tanya Chadwick determined that the majority of duties you performed on a daily basis were consistent with the OA 3 job classification.

On January 29, 2009, the Department of Personnel received your request for a Director's review of DOC's allocation determination. The following summarizes your viewpoint, as well as your employer's.

Summary of Ms. Sauer's Perspective

Ms. Sauer asserts she performs HRCA 2 duties in support of the Facility Performance Coordinator (FPC/Training Manager) at SCCC. Ms. Sauer contends she serves as second in command in the Training Department, which is housed outside the gates of the institution. As a result, Ms. Sauer states the facility is available for use by other facilities and organizations for meetings and training. In her role, Ms. Sauer contends that she facilitates all training for SCCC staff. Ms. Sauer indicates that she coordinates and tracks in-service training for non-custody staff and correctional officers, working with the Roster Manager to ensure employees are available and shifts are covered. Ms. Sauer indicates that she verifies the employees attending training and informs the Roster Manager of any absences or the need to reschedule an employee. Ms. Sauer asserts that she tracks required training, maintains training records, and assists employees with reviewing their training records and updating or viewing personnel information in the computer system. Ms. Sauer contends that she makes arrangements for instructors (typically internal DOC employees) and tracks and enters hours into the ATLAS system for extra pay; coordinates course material and the training room; monitors classes; provides instructional guides; backs up instructors; and conducts training as needed for courses she is qualified to instruct. Ms. Sauer contends she performs the same work as other HRCA 2 positions in training departments located at other facilities. Therefore, Ms. Sauer believes her position should be reallocated to the HRCA 2 level.

Summary of DOC's Reasoning

DOC contends Ms. Sauer's primary duties include scheduling staff and facilities, arranging travel as needed for staff training at other locations, providing paperwork for staff rosters, tracking and notifying employees of needed training, and assisting employees with paperwork or employee self service on the computer. In addition, DOC contends Ms. Sauer schedules instructors, performs data entry, including hours for instructional pay; copies course materials; and composes or proofreads correspondence related to the Training Department. DOC acknowledges Ms. Sauer coordinates staff scheduling and reports training attendance to the Roster Manager. DOC also acknowledges that Ms. Sauer explains policies to instructors and provides them with an instructional guide of the major points for a particular class. However, DOC asserts Ms. Sauer's assigned work involves scheduling in-service training for SCCC staff by following statewide procedures and forwarding items to the Performance Unit at Headquarters as needed. While Ms. Sauer applies rules and regulations, DOC contends her supervisor is responsible for facilitating and executing training as the FPC for the institution. DOC contends the majority of Ms. Sauer's duties and responsibilities do not involve the technical and paraprofessional functions in support of professional level human resources staff, noting that training does not fall under the HR umbrella at SCCC. Instead, DOC asserts the majority of duties performed by Ms. Sauer on a daily basis are consistent with the OA 3 classification.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Duties and Responsibilities

The following summarizes the main points included in the Position Objective, as described on the PDF (Exhibit B-3):

- Secretarial/Human Resource duties that support the FPC (Training Manager), the Armory Sergeant, and the Roster Manager regarding training operations.
- Provides a variety of paraprofessional and technical duties for the SCCC Training Department.
- Facilitates and executes training and performance planning, design, delivery and proper reporting and documentation of all agency staff.
- Manages reconciliation regarding training delivered to SCCC staff as required by policy.
- Interprets training requests, obtains necessary information/signatures, faxes requests to Region for processing, and monitors requests to ensure staff gets credit for outside training.
- Interprets rules pertaining to training and provides technical support to employees/supervisory staff.
- Provides training in in-service and is involved in staff and leadership development and career counseling.

Your primary responsibility is to provide support to the FPC (Training Manager) and the Training Department at SCCC. The FPC is the working title for your supervisor, Eric Stielau, whose position is a Corrections Specialist (Exhibit B-4). During the Director's review conference, both parties clarified that you work with the Roster Manager to ensure staff is scheduled in a manner that allows employees to attend needed training while ensuring there is coverage for the facility. DOC pointed out that an Administrative Assistant position provides direct administrative support to the Roster Manager. You stated that you and your supervisor create a list of employees requiring in-service training on a monthly basis and then work with the Roster Manager to schedule the employees for training. You also indicated that all training requests for SCCC staff come through the Training Office and that you can approve training in the absence of your supervisor.

You explained facilitating and executing training for performance planning involve tracking and monitoring staff training to ensure they keep current with training required by statute

and American Correctional Association (ACA) standards. You also coordinate internal trainers and encourage staff to participate in instructional opportunities and recognize staff for taking on those roles during events like an all staff meeting. You ensure instructors have the materials needed to conduct the training, go over procedures and refer them to instructional guides, such as the one you provided after the Director's review conference (Exhibit C-1). You acknowledged that the instructional guides are prepared by the Performance Unit located at Headquarters. You indicated that you also assist and back up instructors as needed for courses you are certified to teach. As an example, you indicated that you are certified to teach the First Aid/CPR course. You also arrange for the set up and clean up of training conference rooms and may supervise offenders helping you with these tasks.

In addition, you share information about training opportunities with staff, inform staff about tuition reimbursement opportunities, assist staff with creating profiles for e-recruiting and using employee self service, and assist staff with printing training records as requested. DOC noted that staff can also access their own training records independent of going through the Training Office. You further stated that you will forward and share information about outside training opportunities that you receive from Headquarters.

The specific duties outlined in the breakdown of key work activities provide additional insight into your position's assigned work and level of responsibility. The key work activities are summarized as follows (Exhibit B-3):

- 30% Provides customer service support for staff and workload back-up for the Training Office. This includes responding to staff inquiries in person, by email, and by telephone. Monitors the hours assigned to internal instructors conducting training. Assesses, tracks, and orders supplies as needed.
- 10% Assists FPC in monitoring Training Program information, including notification to staff about upcoming training, mandated in-service training, and outside training opportunities. Requests individual training history reports to distribute to staff and supervisors as requested. Maintain confidential record keeping (filing) for all staff training.
- 10% Monitors staff to ensure compliance with RCW/WAC regulations and ACA Standards of mandatory/leadership development training classes. Maintains a tracking system to ensure staff is attending mandated training and tracks the completion of the class.
- 10% Assists FPC with staff development, employee recognition and motivation. Schedules training classrooms for various trainings, workshops and/or meetings. Ensures proper equipment set-up and monitoring the classroom during the day to ensure training/meetings proceed without complications. Assists in evaluating and monitoring facility trainers.

- 10% Coordinates and schedules instructors for in-service training. Establishes, maintains, and archives files of confidential staff training records. Applies specialized knowledge and independent judgment when assisting and backing up FPC. Screens calls and visitors.

Class Specifications

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations. While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification.

The **Human Resource Consultant Assistant** class series concept describes both Human Resource Consultant professional positions (HRCs) and paraprofessional positions (HRCAs), in part, as follows:

...

The Human Resource Consultant is a professional series with a Human Resource Consultant Assistant 1 and 2 as the paraprofessional levels. Positions in this series may require specialization in one or a limited number of human resource areas or may be assigned a wide variety of responsibilities.

Examples of professional responsibilities typically assigned include, but are not limited to: classification, compensation, recruitment, selection, affirmative action, diversity, staff and leadership development and training, career counseling, employee recognition and motivation, advising management on corrective and disciplinary actions, representing an organization in appeals or grievances, conducting labor negotiations, mediation or arbitration, organizational analysis or development, interpretation and application of laws, rules, policies and procedures, and other personnel services. Positions may also be assigned workplace safety or security issues, loss control analysis or prevention, program or policy development, quality consultation, or other functions relating to human resource management in an organization.

Examples of paraprofessional or technical responsibilities typically assigned include, but are not limited to: interpreting rules and policies to direct payroll actions, explaining human resource policies, procedures, and programs to employees, managers, the public, and others; providing technical assistance to support the professional responsibilities listed above; providing guidance to others in registering or applying for human resource programs, completing requests for personnel actions, benefits, etc.; providing training or orientation in area of responsibility; maintaining confidential records and generating reports.

The **Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2** level is defined as performing “a variety of paraprofessional and technical duties in one or more human resource areas providing support to management and staff.” The distinguishing characteristics include serving as an “[a]ssistant to professional level human resource staff and management” and “resolving technical and paraprofessional problems and interpreting and applying human resource rules, policies, regulations or procedures.”

While I recognize that training is a component of HR in many instances, the specific role of your position is to assist the FPC in coordinating and facilitating mandatory training for correctional officers and non-custody staff at SCCC. In that capacity, you track each employee's training record, notify the necessary parties when training is needed, work with the Roster Manager to help ensure training is taken by employees when required, schedule instructors, ensure the training room and materials are ready, and assist employees as needed with training documents, records, and employee self service. The bulk of work assigned to your position involves complex clerical tasks such as tracking, compiling, reporting, and scheduling to meet the training goals of the facility and agency as a whole. Your position has not been assigned responsibility for assisting professional level human resources staff and management regarding human resources rules, policies, and procedures. Therefore, the HRCA 2 classification is not the best fit for the scope of work assigned to your position.

The **Office Assistant 3** definition reads as follows:

Under general supervision, independently perform a variety of complex clerical projects and assignments such as preparing reports, preparing, reviewing, verifying and processing fiscal documents and/or financial records, composing correspondence such as transmittals and responses to frequent requests for information, establishing manual or electronic recordkeeping/filing systems and/or data base files, and responding to inquiries requiring substantive knowledge of office/departmental policies and procedures. Positions may perform specialized complex word processing tasks in a word processing unit or complex rapid data inquiry and/or entry functions.

The distinguishing characteristics emphasize that assignments and projects are complex in nature. Further, OA 3 positions independently perform assignments requiring substantive knowledge of a variety of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, processes, materials, or equipment. Problems are resolved by choosing from established procedures and/or devising work methods. Guidance is available for new or unusual situations. Deviation from established parameters requires approval. Work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with established policies and procedures.

In addition to performing complex clerical tasks, your position requires a strong knowledge about the regulations, rules, policies, and procedures affecting the way SCCC monitors, processes, conducts, and reports staff training at the facility.

I recognize that your supervisor, Eric Stielau, supports your position's reallocation to a higher level (Exhibit B-1). Both of you have indicated that positions performing similar duties at other facilities are HRCA 2s. However, the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) has provided guidance on this issue. In Byrnes v. Dept's of Personnel and Corrections, PRB No. R-ALLO-06-005 (2006), the Board held that "[w]hile a comparison of one position to another similar position may be useful in gaining a better understanding of the duties performed by and the level of responsibility assigned to an incumbent, allocation of a position must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to the existing classifications. The allocation or misallocation of a similar position is not a determining factor in the appropriate allocation of a position." Citing Flahaut v. Dept's of Personnel and Labor and Industries, PAB No. ALLO 96-0009 (1996).

I also want to emphasize that a position's allocation is not a reflection of performance or an individual's ability to perform higher-level work. Rather, it is based on a comparison of duties and responsibilities to the available job classifications. The Office Assistant 3 classification best encompasses the overall scope of work and level of responsibility assigned to your position.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located at 600 South Franklin, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 664-0388, and the fax number is (360) 753-0139.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Joanne Harmon, DOC
Jenny Warnstadt, DOC
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

Ronnie Sauer v. Dept. of Corrections

Stafford Creek Corrections Center

ALLO-09-008

List of Exhibits

A. Ronnie Sauer's Exhibits

1. Letter requesting a Director's Review, received January 29, 2009
2. DOC allocation determination letter dated January 13, 2009
3. Performance and Development Plan dated 5/7/07 to 2/21/08 (Employee Exhibit 1.A)
4. Desk Audit conducted by Teresa Rucker and Position Description Form from December 2007 (Employee Exhibit 1.B)
5. OAS's duties for training created by Ronnie Sauer on 3/25/09 (Employee Exhibit 2.A)
6. Examples of forms used by Ronnie Sauer (Employee Exhibit 3.A)
 - a. In – Service Schedule
 - b. Staff participation form
 - c. Personal Alert Form
7. Examples of forms developed by Ronnie Sauer to make her job easier & new employee agenda (Employee Exhibit 3.B)
 - a. Staff Information Form
 - b. Attendance Reporting for Monthly Reports
8. Sample of information that Ronnie Sauer read aloud to new employees during NEO or Administration Days (Employee Exhibit 4.A)

B. Department of Corrections' Exhibits

1. Supervisors Letter Re: R. Sauer Reallocation Request, October 14, 2008
2. Position Description signed & dated December 21, 2007
3. Position Description April 16, 2008
4. Stafford Creek Organizational Chart
5. Class Specification Office Assistant 3 (100J)
6. Class Specification HRCA 2 (123F)
7. DOC allocation determination letter dated January 13, 2009
8. Letter from Ronnie Sauer requesting Director's Review

C. Email correspondence between parties and Teresa Parsons after Director's Review.

1. September 1, 2009 email from Ronnie Sauer attaching Instructional Guide Example.
2. September 3, 2009 email from Ronnie Sauer to Teresa Parsons forwarding email correspondence from prior allocation review in 2007.
3. September 4, 2009 email from Teresa Rucker, SCCC-HR, clarifying the date of the previous request for position review.